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Public Service Under Government Operation of the Railroads

By MAX THELEN

Director of Public Service, United States Railroad Administration

IN writing this article on *Public Service under Government Operation of the Railroads*, I shall not express views either for or against any particular method of ownership or of operation of the railroads of the United States. My sole purpose will be to chronicle some of the salient facts which bear on the character of the service given to the public by the railroads while under government operation. These facts constitute a part of the nation's war history and are worthy of being collected and preserved.

THE WAR AND RAILROAD SERVICE

The winning of the war was the premier consideration in the operation of the railroads by the government. Whatever changes in the existing methods of operation or in the character of the existing service to the public were necessary to this end were made without hesitation. The comfort and convenience of the travelling and shipping public were necessarily and by common consent subordinated to the nation's first and primary need. To the lasting credit of the American people, it should be said that they clearly understood the situation and uncomplainingly and patriotically coöperated in the common cause.

War conditions inevitably made operation of the railroads by the government far more difficult from the point of view of the public service than would have been the case in normal peace times. The disruption of existing railroad organizations through enlistment in the armed forces of the nation, the resulting employment of inexperienced men and women, the reduction in passenger train mileage resulting principally from the necessity for securing adequate passenger equipment for the movement of troops, the changes in theretofore existing channels of transportation made necessary by the requirements of war traffic, and other situations created by the war, all combined to make a satisfactory public

service prior to the signing of the armistice and for many months thereafter far more difficult than would have been the case if the nation had been pursuing the normal paths of peace. The splendid manner in which these difficulties were surmounted by the railroad operating officials during the period of government operation will remain as a lasting tribute to their efficiency and their patriotism.

When the armistice was signed, it was only natural that complaints with reference to the character of railroad service should find expression. War time restraints were over and the pendulum inevitably swung the other way. The Railroad Administration proceeded as promptly as possible to restore pre-war service in so far as it appeared to be reasonably responsive to public needs and at the same time to retain and perfect the very great improvements in service which unified operation by the government had created. The number of complaints against the service rose to a maximum shortly after the signing of the armistice, but steadily declined thereafter until at the present time there is substantial agreement that the American people are receiving first-class freight and passenger service in so far as possible with the existing equipment.

FREIGHT SERVICE

At the time the government undertook the operation of the railroads, the North Atlantic terminals, as well as practically all the railroad lines east of Chicago to the Atlantic seaboard, were badly congested with traffic for export and for the industries in the East. The Atlantic terminals were crowded with freight cars which it was impossible to unload. Long lines of loaded freight cars destined for the East but which it was impossible to move filled the side-tracks as far west as the plains of Kansas. The nation was confronted with the most serious railroad operating problem that it had ever faced. These difficulties were accentuated by the severest winter which this section of the country had ever known. The facts concerning the severity of this winter and] the effect on transportation conditions are too well known to justify detailed recital.

It was at this time, with transportation conditions more difficult than ever before, that the federal government undertook

the operation of the railroads of the United States. As the result of unified operation by the government and of the measures taken in pursuance thereof, the freight congestion was removed by May 1, 1918. Throughout the remaining period of the war, there never was any doubt as to the ability of the nation's transportation machinery to meet every war requirement.

Attention is now invited to some of the more important steps taken by the United States Railroad Administration to give an adequate and satisfactory freight service.

1. Solid Train Movements

In order to meet the food requirements of our Allies, the Railroad Administration devised the plan of solid train movements of food stuffs from the West to the eastern seaboard. Cars of food stuffs destined to a given port were consolidated into solid trains and moved via the most direct open route, irrespective of shippers' routing and regardless of any particular line or lines of transportation. The plan of solid train movements was thereafter applied to the movement of fruit and other perishables from California and the North Pacific coast states, to the movement of oil from the mid-continent field to eastern destinations, to the movement of spruce, fir and other lumber from the Northwest for use in the aviation service, in shipbuilding and in other war industries, to the movement of packing house products from Missouri River points to the East and in other instances, with very greatly increased transportation efficiency. The Railroad Administration is in receipt of many letters from shippers who received this new kind of service and who state that the service thus received by them was better than any service theretofore accorded to them.

2. Unification of Freight Terminals and Lines

For the purpose of securing greater efficiency in the transportation of freight into, through and around existing terminals, the Railroad Administration proceeded to the unification and coördination of such terminals wherever it seemed clear that transportation efficiency would be substantially improved thereby.

Terminal managers were appointed for the larger cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Seattle, and more or less complete unification was effected in many smaller

terminals. In the West alone, 136 freight stations were closed as the result of unification.

Chicago furnishes a striking example of constructive results accomplished by such unification. There existed in that city an Inner Belt Line which was the Belt Railway of Chicago; a Middle Belt Line, which was the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad; and the Outer Belt Line which was the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad. The Railroad Administration proceeded to reduce congestion in Chicago and to expedite the movement of through freight around Chicago by using the Outer Belt Line as an interchange railroad for traffic moving to points beyond Chicago, with the exception of perishables. Perishables were routed via the Middle Belt Line which has adequate and excellent icing facilities. The Inner Belt Line was used principally for the delivery of cars within the Chicago district.

All railroad marine facilities in New York Harbor were consolidated under a marine manager and were used in common. One hundred and seventeen coal carrying barges and 18 tugs belonging to the Philadelphia & Reading, the Lehigh Valley, the New York, Ontario & Western and the Erie Railroads were pooled under a single manager, with very satisfactory results.

Illustrations of improvements in the service resulting from unification of road haul facilities are found in the routing of Baltimore & Ohio freight trains between McKeesport and Newcastle over the tracks of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, where one engine will handle the tonnage of five engines between the same points on the Baltimore & Ohio lines; the handling of westbound coal from the Fairmont district and coke from the lower Connellsville region on the Baltimore & Ohio over the Monongahela, Pittsburgh & Lake Erie and the Pennsylvania to the Pittsburgh district, thus releasing the Baltimore & Ohio for movement of additional eastbound business, principally coal from the Fairmont district to seaboard; and the use of single track separately owned lines between Pueblo and Denver, 118.5 miles, and between Wells and Winnemucca, 185 miles, as a double track.

3. Routing of Freight

The Railroad Administration early established approved routings of freight, irrespective of the ownership of any particular

transportation system, for the purpose of eliminating circuitous routing and of securing greater efficiency and economy in operation. Re-routing of freight cars was freely used for the purpose of avoiding congested lines, of moving around congested terminals and of diverting freight from congested ports to those which were open. Such re-routing resulted not merely in reduced operating expenses but also in more prompt service.

4. Unified control of equipment

The Railroad Administration promptly placed practically all passenger and freight equipment in a single pool, irrespective of the corporate ownership, and drew therefrom as needed in order to meet the requirements of various sections of the country for particular equipment, either motive power or cars. This work, which was done under the supervision of the Car Service Section of the Division of Operation and the organizations in the various Regions, resulted in meeting the greatest transportation necessities of the nation with practically no increase in the amount of the existing equipment. With the exception of coal cars, all classes of equipment, were distributed without regard to ownership. In this way alone could the transportation emergency have been met.

5. Permit system

In order to prevent freight from accumulating at destinations where it could not be unloaded, the Railroad Administration adopted the so-called permit system under which it was necessary for a receiver of freight, before freight could move to him, to show that ocean tonnage was available or that the freight could be unloaded promptly on arrival at destination. This system worked so successfully in helping to remove the congestion in the eastern ports that it was later extended to the movement of grain in the West. While the permit system was suspended, in so far as domestic traffic was concerned, shortly after the signing of the armistice, it remained effective as to export shipments and has recently been re-instated to assist in the movement of the enormous grain crop.

6. Car Loading

An effective campaign to increase car loading was already under way before the government undertook the operation of the

railroads. Subsequent to that time, however, through action taken by the Food Administration and through patriotic coöperation on the part of the shippers, even more effective car loading was accomplished than had been secured prior to the war. The records of the Railroad Administration show that between January and October, inclusive, 1918, the average load per loaded car increased 2.2 tons, or 8 per cent over the corresponding period in 1917.

FREIGHT SERVICE AFTER THE ARMISTICE

After the signing of the armistice, the foregoing and other methods adopted by the Railroad Administration for the purpose of increasing efficiency and according better service in connection with the transportation of freight, were retained and to some extent improved upon, with the exception of the partial suspension of the permit system and of the recognition of the shipper's right to route his freight subject to the continuing supervision of the Railroad Administration in the interest of economy.

The most marked improvement in freight service subsequent to the signing of the armistice has been in the more prompt and efficient handling of less than carload freight, with the result that at the present time this service in various sections of the country is reliably stated to be better than at any other time in our history.

FREIGHT CLAIMS

The prevention and the prompt disposition of freight claims constitute part of the service which the public expects a transportation system to accord to it. Mr. Hines, personally, has taken deep interest in both the prevention and the prompt settlement of freight claims. Under his instructions, a campaign both of prevention and of the prompt disposition of freight claims has been instituted on all the railroad systems of the country. The purpose of this campaign is not merely to effect a clean-up of the existing claims but also to take measures of prevention for the future.

Reports received from the various federal managers show that they have appointed committees of general officers; that they are holding meetings of agents, trainmasters, local train crews, checkers and clerks at freight stations; that they are selecting

special representatives or field men to visit stations, check claims papers in the hands of agents and instruct employes as to the protection of freight from pilfering, and as to marking, handling and storage; that they are issuing circulars drawing attention to the principal causes of freight claims and enlisting the interest of employes in the prevention of loss and damage; and that they are taking other steps which experience has shown to be wise in handling these problems.

The sustained effort on the part of the Railroad Administration to dispose of freight claims is shown by the following tabulation:

STATEMENT BY REGIONS OF LOSS AND
DAMAGE FREIGHT CLAIMS UNSETTLED

			Total Decrease Since March 1, 1919	Per cent of Decrease Since March 1, 1919
Region	March 1, 1919	July 1, 1919	March 1, 1919	March 1, 1919
Eastern.....	287,720	176,220	111,500	38.7
Allegheny.....	143,161	97,686	45,475	31.7
Pocahontas.....	10,935	5,093	5,842	53.4
Southern.....	142,191	95,844	46,347	32.5
North Western.....	155,618	104,518	51,100	32.8
Central Western.....	100,515	62,366	38,149	37.9
South Western.....	48,057	33,945	14,112	29.3
Total.....	888,197	575,672	312,525	35.1

As will be noted, the number of unsettled freight claims decreased 312,525 or 35.1 per cent between March 1, 1919, and July 1, 1919. Each month since March 1, 1919, has shown a reduction of approximately 10 per cent in the number of unsettled freight claims.

The number of overcharge claims presented each month still runs disappointingly high. During the three months ending March 31, 1919, 358,996 overcharge claims were presented to the Railroad Administration, while during the three months ending June 30, 1919, 349,381 such claims were presented. On the other hand, the number of overcharge claims unpaid more than 90 days old fell from 54,454 on March 31, 1919, to 24,287 on June 30, 1919, clearly showing the results of the campaign to clean up the old unsettled claims.

Prior to federal control, many railroad systems were actively engaged in trying to prevent claims and in making prompt disposition of such claims as might accrue. Other railroads were making far less satisfactory efforts. The control of the United States Railroad Administration extends to all the railroads of the country operated by it, thus making its activities as to both the prevention and the disposition of freight claims more far reaching and effective than was the case prior to federal control.

PASSENGER SERVICE

The movement of troops and their equipment required the release of passenger train equipment wherever this could be done with reasonable regard to the requirements of the civilian population.

The extent of the problem of transporting the troops is shown by the fact that between May 1, 1917, and June 30, 1919, there were 13,890,691 individual troop transportation movements. This total consisted of 7,988,707 movements in special troop trains, 3,614,058 movements in regular trains and 2,287,926 movements of drafted men from their homes to camps in special trains. For this transportation, the Railroad Administration utilized 319,277 individual car movements including Pullman cars, coaches, and baggage and express cars. The Railroad Administration ran 18,895 special troop trains.

In order to secure the necessary equipment to move these troops, as well as to conserve manpower, a careful survey was made of the passenger train mileage of the country, and duplicate and nonessential mileage was eliminated. On December 31, 1918, 67,290,562 passenger train miles had been eliminated, divided into Regions as follows:

Eastern.....	16,253,914
Allegheny.....	4,870,000
Southern.....	1,702,480
Northwestern.....	23,280,400
Central Western.....	16,772,524
Southwestern.....	4,411,244
Total.....	67,290,562

A considerable portion of the passenger mileage thus eliminated represented unnecessary duplication of passenger train service such as existed between various of the larger cities of the country as the result of excessive and wasteful competition. For instance, the service between Chicago and St. Louis was reduced 40 per cent, but the over-night trains which were continued in operation were sufficient to furnish nearly all passengers with lower berths.

Subsequent to the signing of the armistice, such of the former passenger train mileage as seemed desirable, in view of the altered situation, was gradually restored. By June 30, 1919, 11,461,758 passenger train miles had been thus re-instated.

The magnitude of the passenger problem with which the Railroad Administration was confronted is shown by the fact that on 230,000 miles of Class I railroads under federal control the number of passengers carried during the first 6 months of the years 1917, 1918 and 1919 increased as follows:

1917.....	464,978,544
1918.....	516,505,600
1919.....	540,498,510

It will be observed that the number of passengers carried during the first 6 months of 1919 was approximately 16 per cent greater than during the corresponding period in 1917. Nevertheless, the amount of passenger equipment was substantially the same as in 1917.

In addition to the elimination of passenger train mileage here-inbefore referred to, attention is invited to some of the other significant steps taken by the government in connection with passenger service.

1. Consolidated Ticket Offices

Prior to the war, the various railroad corporations quite generally maintained separate city or up-town ticket offices, particularly in the larger cities. The Railroad Administration consolidated these various ticket offices and is now operating 111 consolidated ticket offices in cities where prior to the war 564 separate offices were maintained. These offices have proved of very great convenience to the public and there is a wide-spread demand on the part of the public that these offices be retained.

2. Unification of passenger terminals

Considerable convenience to the public as well as economy in operation has resulted from the unification of passenger terminal facilities in various sections of the country.

Perhaps the best known of these unifications is the use of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in New York City by the through passenger trains of the Baltimore & Ohio and the Lehigh Valley, with very great resulting convenience to the public. Another illustration of such unification is the joint use of the Southern Pacific Company's Oakland Pier on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay by the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company and the Western Pacific Railway Company. This consolidation enabled the Railroad Administration to dispense with the ferry service of both the Santa Fe and the Western Pacific across San Francisco Bay and also has resulted in the saving of considerable time to passengers going to and from San Francisco over the line of the Santa Fe.

While attention has been drawn to only a few illustrations, the extent of the passenger terminal unification is shown by the fact that in the West alone 90 passenger stations were closed, without impairment of the service to the public.

3. Staggering of Passenger Trains

Under the competitive conditions which prevailed prior to federal control, it was customary to have passenger trains of rival railroads leave a city at about the same time frequently at least half empty and to arrive at the other terminus also at about the same time. The Railroad Administration eliminated a considerable amount of this unnecessary passenger service and staggered the remaining service so that with less passenger equipment the times of arrival and departure were more frequent than theretofore. A passenger travelling between Washington and New York can now leave either terminus at almost any hour over either the Pennsylvania or the Baltimore & Ohio with a ticket good over either line.

4. Dining Car Service

For the purpose of conserving food and of securing greater efficiency from the use of the existing dining cars, *table d'hôte*

dining car service was made effective on October 1, 1918. *Table d'hôte* luncheons and dinners were served at the uniform price of \$1.00, except upon a few limited trains where \$1.25 was charged for dinners.

After the signing of the armistice, it became apparent that this service did not meet the requirements of the American travelling public. Accordingly, on March 1, 1919, *à la carte* service was restored except on a few of the more heavily loaded trains where *table d'hôte* meals are served as a means of expediting service. The *table d'hôte* meal served a useful purpose while it was in effect. At the present time, there is very little complaint concerning the dining car service which is being given by the United States Railroad Administration and it is generally considered that this service is at least as good as it was prior to the period of federal control.

5. Maintenance of Schedules

During the war, it became necessary to lengthen passenger train schedules in quite a number of instances. After the signing of the armistice, these schedules have again been shortened wherever it seemed appropriate to do so and very particular attention has been paid to having trains run on schedule time. The records of the Railroad Administration show that the number of trains which run on schedule is at least as great as before federal control, while in certain sections of the country, particularly the South, the record is very much better.

ADJUSTMENT OF RATES

Proper service by the railroads to the public presupposes the existence of a procedure through which such alterations in rates as become necessary, from time to time, can be made in a prompt and satisfactory manner. The necessity for such a procedure became particularly apparent by reason of the changes in existing rate relationships effected by General Order No. 28, making general increases in freight and passenger rates.

For the purpose of meeting this situation, the Railroad Administration established a series of Freight Traffic Committees, conveniently located in various sections of the country, to which the shippers as well as the traffic officers of the carriers might appeal for adjustment of freight rates.

District, or local, committees were established with headquarters at Atlanta, Birmingham, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Louisville, New Orleans, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, Richmond, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, St. Louis and St. Paul. General committees, having jurisdiction, respectively, over Official (or Eastern), Western and Southern territory, were established in New York, Chicago and Atlanta. Committees intermediate between certain District Committees in Eastern territory and the Eastern General Committee were established in New York and Chicago. Special committees for the consideration of freight rates on coal and coke alone were established at Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

A shipper or a traffic official of a carrier who desires an adjustment of an existing freight rate files a petition with the proper freight traffic committee. The matter is docketed for hearing, all interested parties including the state railroad commission are notified, a public hearing is held and thereafter the committee submits its recommendations. If the matter is one of local interest alone, the recommendation, under the revised procedure, is submitted directly to the Directors of Traffic and Public Service in Washington. If the matter affects one or more districts, the recommendation is first transmitted to the appropriate General Committee and by the latter to Washington.

Between June 15, 1918, and July 26, 1919, 11,376 freight rate authorities, authorizing modifications in rates, were issued by the Central Railroad Administration in Washington as the result of proceedings in the various freight traffic committees and action by the Directors of Traffic and Public Service in Washington. This number is equivalent to an average of 200 per week.

Whenever a proceeding substantially affects state rates, the matter is submitted to the appropriate state railroad commission for its advice and suggestions, before final action is taken in Washington. If the matter involves interstate rates and is of substantial importance and the parties have been unable to agree, the matter is submitted to the Interstate Commerce Commission for its advice and suggestions in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of the Federal Control Act.

In order to make sure that the point of view of the shippers

should receive due consideration, it was provided, initially, that there should be on each freight traffic committee one or more members representing the shippers, the number being always one less than the number of representatives of the carriers. However, in the early part of 1919, a change was made so that thereafter each committee has consisted of an equal number of representatives of the shippers and of the carriers. With the same purpose in mind, it has also been provided that no freight rate authority shall be issued by the Railroad Administration, unless the matter has first been brought to the attention of the Division of Public Service in Washington and unless that Division agrees to the issue of the freight rate authority; provided that if the Division of Traffic and the Division of Public Service cannot agree, the matter may be submitted to the Director General personally for his decision.

The machinery which has thus been provided for the adjustment of rates works promptly and with apparent satisfaction to all parties interested. For the first time in the history of railroad rate making in the United States, representatives of the shippers have, from the moment of the initiation of the rate, an equal voice with the representatives of the carriers.

While referring to rates, it may be appropriate to draw attention to the fact that the increases in freight and passenger rates during the period of government operation have averaged only approximately 25 per cent while during the same period the cost of almost everything which our people eat and wear has risen from 50 to 100 per cent and even higher. Considering the purchasing power of the dollar, railroad rates and fares have been lower during the period of government operation than ever before.

SAFETY

Satisfactory railroad service presupposes that adequate means are taken to promote the safety of the public and of the employes.

The Safety Section of the Division of Operation has provided for the appointment of Safety Committees on all the railroad systems in the United States. These committees consist of representatives of both the officers and the employes and meet regularly for the purpose of promoting safety work. The Safety Section has inaugurated a "No Accident Week" campaign in

the various Regions and reports very satisfactory results therefrom. The "No Accident Week" campaign which was conducted during the week from June 22 to June 29, 1919, in the Northwestern Region showed a reduction in the number of accidents from 481, of which 6 were fatal, in the corresponding week in 1918 to only 119, of which 5 were fatal, being a decrease of 75.26 per cent in the total number of accidents. A similar campaign conducted in the Central Western Region during the same week showed a reduction from 9 fatalities and 447 other injuries in the corresponding week in 1918 to 4 fatalities and 94 other injuries, being a total decrease of 79 per cent.

Due to the very severe transportation conditions in the months of January and February, 1918, a reduction in the number of killed and injured during the same months in 1919 might reasonably have been expected. However, the same satisfactory showing continued during the months of March and April, 1919, as appears from the following table showing the reductions in the total number of killed and injured, both employes and all cases, during the first 4 months of 1919 as compared with the same 4 months in 1918:

	REDUCTIONS IN ACCIDENTS			
	<i>Employes</i>		<i>All Cases</i>	
	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed
January.....	2,598	135	3,058	175
February.....	2,959	163	3,264	222
March.....	3,687	94	3,732	196
April.....	2,649	98	3,111	174
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11,893	490	13,165	764

The very satisfactory results which have followed the work of the Safety Section and its various committees have undoubtedly been due in large part to the uniform control over this work on all railroad systems of the country exercised during the period of government operation.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The Division of Public Service is one of the 10 divisions of the Central Railroad Administration in Washington.

This Division was created primarily for the purpose of provid-

ing that in whatever action is taken by the Central Railroad Administration in Washington affecting the interests of the traveling or the shipping public, the public point of view shall receive full consideration. The Division is also charged with the responsibility of investigating and seeking to adjust such complaints concerning railroad rates or service as are transmitted to the Railroad Administration in Washington. The Division has jurisdiction over the relations between the Railroad Administration and the various state railroad commissions. Also, the Division has a Short Line Railroad Section to which short line railroads may apply for assistance in case they believe that they are not being fairly treated by the Railroad Administration.

The Division of Public Service and Accounting was created on February 9, 1918, with Honorable Charles A. Prouty as Director. The Division of Public Service was linked together with the Division of Accounting until February 1, 1919, at which time the writer of this article entered the Railroad Administration as Director of a separate and independent Division of Public Service.

The following tabulation shows the number of initial letters received by the Division of Public Service, relating to rates and service, from February, 1918, to July, 1919, inclusive.

February, 1918	16
March	63
April	79
May	147
June	1,800
July	1,029
August	746
September	875
October	851
November	1,117
December	1,184
January, 1919	1,500
February	1,530
March	2,323
April	3,473
May	3,297
June	3,126
July	2,692
Total	25,848

Of the foregoing letters, approximately 70 per cent refer to rate matters and 30 per cent to service matters.

The increase in the number of letters received subsequent to February 1, 1919, shows that the public was quick to avail itself of an independent agency in the Railroad Administration, charged with particular responsibility for seeing to it that due consideration is given to the point of view of the public. On the other hand, the decrease in the number of letters received, from 3,473 in April to 2,692 in July, reflects the undoubted improvement in railroad operation and the increasing satisfaction of the public with the character of the service, both freight and passenger, which the public is now receiving.

The limits of this article do not permit a detailed reference to the nature of the complaints received by the Division of Public Service, but it will suffice to say that they run the entire gamut of railroad rates and service. The Division of Public Service tries earnestly to give prompt, courteous and efficient attention to all letters received and has disposed, to the satisfaction of the parties interested, of nearly all the complaints which have come to it.

The number of complaints hereinbefore referred to does not include the communications which have come to the Bureau for Suggestions and Complaints. This bureau was established in September, 1918, for the purpose of receiving complaints and suggestions from the public with reference to the quality of railroad service in response to bulletins posted in passenger coaches, railroad stations and other convenient places. The work of the Bureau has been limited to letters received in response to the invitations contained in such bulletins. The number of original letters received by the Bureau has fallen from 3,702 in September, 1918, to 1,144 in July, 1919, and the number of secondary or follow-up letters relating to the same subjects from 3,792 in November, 1918, to 1,740 in July, 1919. Each complaint is followed up and such unsatisfactory conditions as are revealed by the correspondence are corrected. On February 1, 1919, the Bureau for Suggestions and Complaints was made part of the Division of Public Service.

The Division of Public Service was established and is operating in frank recognition of the fact that the first duty of transpor-

tation systems and, in fact, their only real excuse for existence, is to give to the public satisfactory service at reasonable rates.

The operation of our railroads by the government has undoubtedly created a more wide-spread public interest than formerly existed in the operation and welfare of our transportation system. More than ever before, our people realize the important part which transportation plays in the life of the nation and of each individual citizen. The greater public interest which has been aroused will certainly result in improved relations between the railroads and the public and in a more satisfactory service by these agents of the public.

PERMANENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OPERATION OF RAILROADS TO PUBLIC SERVICE

In the opinion of the writer, it would be most unfortunate if the constructive work which has been done by the government in relation to both freight and passenger service should be permitted to be lost when the properties of the carriers are returned to their private owners for operation. It would seem far wiser for the American people to take a leaf from the book of their war-time experience and to insist that the improvements in service which have been effected by the Railroad Administration should be retained by the private railroad corporations in so far as is compatible with operation by a large number of separately operated railroad corporations.

The writer is of the opinion that it would be in the interest of the American people if the following constructive results, among others which have been accomplished by the federal government, during the period of federal control, and which bear on the character of the public service, were retained by the private railroad corporations when they again operate their properties:

1. *Pooling of Equipment.*—The continuation of the pooling of motive power and equipment under the supervision of some central authority, to be exercised at least whenever there is a shortage of equipment. Such pooling is particularly desirable as to box, refrigerator, stock and flat cars.

2. *Unification of Terminals.*—The retention of the constructive results which have been accomplished by the federal government, and the extension of the principle so that a railroad corporation having terminal facilities shall be obliged, on just and reasonable compensation, to permit the use of such facilities by another railroad corporation when the public interest requires such use.

3. *Consolidated Ticket Offices.*—The retention of the consolidated passenger ticket offices established by the Railroad Administration and the establishment of additional offices as needed.

4. *Disregard of Routing Instructions.*—A disregard of routing instructions whenever necessary to relieve congestion either of terminals or of railroad lines. A continuance of solid train movements wherever reasonably possible.

5. *Permit System.*—The use of this system whenever necessary in order to avoid congestion.

6. *Elimination of Waste in Unnecessary Competitive Train Service.*—Particularly, the refusal to install again the competitive and highly wasteful passenger service which existed prior to federal control between many of the larger cities of the country.

7. *Representation of shippers in initial making of rates.*—The establishment of some procedure by which shippers shall continue to have a voice in the initiation of rates.

8. *Speed in Adjustment of Rates.*—Adequate provision for the adjustment of rates with a speed approximating that with which the various Freight Traffic Committees of the United States Railroad Administration and the Divisions of Traffic and Public Service are now doing their work.

9. *Freight Claims.*—Continuation by some central authority having jurisdiction over all railroad systems of the effective campaign for the prevention and the prompt disposition of freight claims which has been initiated and is now being prosecuted by the Railroad Administration.

10. *Safety Work.*—Continuation by some central authority having jurisdiction over all railroad systems of the campaign for safety which has been initiated and is now being carried forward by the Railroad Administration.

11. *Public Service Work.*—The establishment by each railroad corporation of some Division or Agency charged with the duty of giving consideration to the point of view of the public in rate and service matters and of seeing to it that complaints from the public receive prompt, courteous and considerate attention.